

HOLY FAMILY CHURCH
12010 Woodmore Road
Mitchellville
Prince George's County
Maryland

HABS NO. MD-1021

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PHOTOGRAPHS AND
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HOLY FAMILY ~~CATHOLIC~~ CHURCH

HABS NO. MD-1021

Location: 12010 Woodmore Road, Mitchellville, Prince George's County, Maryland

Significance: Holy Family Church was built in 1890 as a mission of Sacred Heart Church at Whitemarsh to serve the black Catholic community of the Woodmore-Mitchellville area. It is one of the few black historical sites extant, and was built by its parishioners. It is a fine example of rural, late-Victorian ecclesiastic architecture with elements of the Gothic and Stick styles.

Description: This is a two-bay-by-five-bay, one-and-a-half-story frame structure, covered with german siding, with a steep-pitched, gable-front roof and two entries at the south front. At each of the two front entries are gabled vestibules with double doors and gothic transoms with a rosette-pattern tracery. In the gable end is a round window, also in a rosette pattern. Between the entries is a tripartite, lancet-arched window. There is stick-style ornament in the gable ends of the main block and the entry vestibules. There is also a bell cote at the front gable end. The windows are large, pointed-arched, twelve-over-twelve-light double-hung sash with a tracery pattern in the arch. There is a small, frame sacristy addition at the north side.

The interior of the church has a wood-paneled, vaulted ceiling with exposed roof trusses. There is an organ loft, with a lancet-arch-pattern balustrade, at the south end. It is accessed by a partially enclosed stairway in the southwest corner. The altar is set in a round-arched alcove. There is a center aisle with modern pews. The stations-of-the-cross (in cast-plaster) are featured along the side walls.

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History:

Holy Family Catholic Church was built in 1890 by the surrounding community of black and mulatto families on land donated by Isaac and Willie Ann Wood. Isaac Wood was a local carpenter and a member of the family that gave the nearby community of Woodmore its name. As a member of Sacred Heart Church at White Marsh--a church with a white majority congregation--Wood recognized the need for a local Catholic mission for blacks (Pearl). According to oral tradition, Holy Family Church was built by the parishioners themselves, mostly tenant farmers (Kidd).

Following the dedication in 1890, the church was served by the Jesuit Fathers from Sacred Heart as a mission. In 1938 it became its own parish, and its administration was turned over to the Josephite Fathers whose principal mission was the ministry of black churches. With the development in this area beginning in the late 1960s, there has been an influx of white families who have also joined the church. Since 1972, Holy family has received pastorship through the Diocese of Washington (Pearl).

The church underwent renovation/restoration in 1983-84 by the Gibbons Company of Baltimore. They undertook such changes as the removal of paneling that had been added, and re-stuccoed the interior as originally intended (Kidd).

Sources:

Pearl, Susan G. (PG Co. HPC) National Register of Historic Places, Inventory-Nomination Form, Holy Family Roman Catholic Church, prepared July 1984.

Father Kidd, interview with Catherine Lavoie.

Historian:

Catherine C. Lavoie
Historic American Buildings Survey
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